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## ABSTRACT

The outcomes for the 1987-88 school year achieved by eight private alternative schools that have contracted with the Portland (Oregon) Public Schools (PPS) to provide educational services to students are reported. The schools are: (1) Albina Youth Opportunity School (AYOS); (2) AYOS-Genesis; (3) DePaul Center Youth Treatment Services; (4) Lents Education Center (LEC); (5) Morrison Center Adolescent Drug and Alcohol Treatment Program; (6) Open Meadow Learning Center (OMLC); (7) Portland Opportunities Industrialization Center (POIC); and (8) Quest Alternative School (QAS). AYOS, LEC, OMLC, and POIC have contracted continuously with the PPS for 5 years or more. The curricula and other arrangements of these schools are much like those of regular high schools, with highly individualized class work. The QAS--a more recent contractor--is much like the preceding schools. DePaul and Morrison provide drug and alcohol treatment, with education an integral component. AYOS-Genesis serves students who are under court order to attend. About 200 students received services from the eight schools at any given time, with about 600 served in the school year. Stays of longer durations in these schools were associated with better outcomes. A report on each school includes its philosophy, educational program and resources, and student population. The diversity of these programs illustrates the difficulties in defining standards to measure the effectiveness of these schools. Recommendations are made individually for improvement of each program. (SLD)

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1987-88

OUTCOMES ACHIEVED BY

**PRIVATE ALTERNATIVE SCHOOLS  
SEPTEMBER 1987 TO DECEMBER 1988****IN THE  
PORTLAND PUBLIC SCHOOLS**

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May, 1989

OUTCOMES ACHIEVED BY  
PRIVATE ALTERNATIVE SCHOOLS  
SEPTEMBER 1987 TO DECEMBER 1988

Albina Youth Opportunity School  
AYOS - Genesis  
De Paul Treatment Centers, Inc.  
Lents Education Center  
Morrison Center Drug and Alcohol Treatment Program  
Open Meadow Learning Center  
Portland Opportunities Industrialization Center  
Quest Alternative School

May 1989

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## ADMINISTRATIVE SUMMARY

### OUTCOMES ACHIEVED BY PRIVATE ALTERNATIVE SCHOOLS SEPTEMBER 1987 TO DECEMBER 1988 1988-89

Eight organizations, private alternative schools, contracted with PPS to provide educational services for Portland students. They are as follows:

- Albina Youth Opportunity School (AYOS)
- AYOS - Genesis
- DePaul Center Youth Treatment Services (DePaul)
- Lents Education Center (LEC)
- Morrison Center Adolescent Drug and Alcohol Treatment Program (Morrison)
- Open Meadow Learning Center (OMLC)
- Portland Opportunities Industrialization Center (POIC)
- Quest Alternative School (Quest)

Four schools, AYOS, LEC, OMLC, and POIC, have contracted continuously with PPS for five years or more. These schools serve similar high risk students mostly of high school age. The curricula, class schedules, and other arrangements of these four schools are much like those of regular high schools. Student characteristics and varied times of enrollment dictate that basic skills class work be highly individualized. Returning to regular schools, completing graduation requirements, or transitioning to other satisfactory placements are goals of these schools.

The remaining four schools all began contracting with PPS about three years ago or less. Quest, which serves students in the Southwest, is much like the four older alternative schools. The four older schools and Quest, perhaps, are considered the more typical alternative schools where students choose to enroll, attend the equivalent of a school day, and are expected to complete a planned educational program.

DePaul and Morrison provide drug and alcohol treatment for high school age clients in residential and day treatment programs. The educational program is an integral part of the treatment and students continue only so long as they are in treatment. The contract with PPS is for educational services.

AYOS - Genesis was awarded the contract formerly held by Frontier I which was formed as a result of the downsizing of MacLaren and Hillcrest. Students are under court order to enroll and attend as a condition of parole or probation. Educational services are provided through a contract with PPS, and the State Children Services Division handles the treatment program.

It is estimated that nearly 200 students are receiving services by the eight schools at any given time with a total of about 600 served during a school or calendar year. The durations of stays among and even within schools range from less than a month to a full year or more. Shorter durations of stays of a month or two usually appear to result in unsuccessful outcomes. Where enrollment in the educational program is not a part of a treatment program, duration of stays is considered important for program or formative evaluation purposes. These data and other student outcome or summative data are presented in the report.

## OVERVIEW OF PRIVATE ALTERNATIVE SCHOOLS

The private alternative schools included in this report provide services for students away from public school campuses. Staff members are employees of the private institutions and not of the District. The eight private alternative schools are as follows:

- Albina Youth Opportunity School (AYOS)
- AYOS - Genesis (Genesis)
- DePaul Center Youth Treatment Services (DePaul)
- Lents Education Center (LEC)
- Morrison Center Drug and Alcohol Treatment Program (Morrison)
- Open Meadow Learning Center (OMLC)
- Portland Opportunities Industrialization Center (POIC)
- Quest Alternative School (Quest)

Four schools have contracted continuously with PPS for over five years. They are: Albina Youth Opportunity School (AYOS), Lents Education Center (LEC), Open Meadow Learning Center (OMLC), and Portland Opportunities Industrialization Center (POIC). Although these four schools are similar, there are some differences in the populations they serve and in the way each school operates.

The remaining four schools began contracting with the District within the last five years. One school, Quest, serves students much like those of the four older schools and serves them in much the same manner. Two, DePaul and Morrison, operate year-round and serve students who are drug and/or alcohol dependent with the aim of overcoming the dependency. The last and most recent school to contract with PPS is Genesis. It serves students as a condition of parole, probation, or diversion from MacLaren and Hillcrest.

Past evaluation reports prepared by the Evaluation Department provided a comprehensive picture of each alternative school in terms of resources, school program, students, and outcomes. The purpose was to provide information to judge the efficiency and effectiveness of a program. Currently each school submits a mid-year and year-end report which details much of this information. Rather than duplicating this information and that compiled by the PPS Alternative Education Program office, the present evaluation takes data contained in mid-year and year-end reports and compiles and summarizes them in such a way that the results become more useful for evaluation purposes. Then, comments on the outcome data and also recommendations for their use by the schools are made.

It should be understood that each school is quite unique in the kinds of students it serves, its philosophy in serving students, and the kinds of outcomes it holds for students. It is not the intent of the evaluation to change the philosophy of the school, or to make recommendations for outcomes; however, it is the intent to summarize what is considered the most important outcomes and to

make recommendations about which information can be used to improve program operations and to make decisions affecting the programs.

In the remainder of this document, separate reports consisting of three parts will be presented for each school. First, a general overview of what the school intends to do and what the expected outcomes are, or appear to be, will be presented. Next, outcome information submitted by the schools will be summarized. All schools provide information on attendance, current disposition, and entry and exit dates from which duration of enrollment can be determined. Because current disposition was expressed in terms of ten categories in the mid-year report and in terms of three categories in the year-end report, outcomes were compiled and will be shown separately for the two reporting periods. Other information and considered to be important for evaluation purposes will be summarized where it is provided in the reports. The last section of each school's report consists of comments and any recommendations regarding evaluation or outcomes for that school. Finally, the Summary and Conclusions section of this document contains a general overview of outcome information and conclusions as applied to evaluation across the alternative schools.

## ALBINA YOUTH OPPORTUNITY SCHOOL

### Overview

The Albina Youth Opportunity School (AYOS) year end report states that "Activities at AYOS are designed to prepare students to succeed both inside and outside the AYOS facility." The intent of the school is to shape student behaviors, so they will be able to succeed after they leave AYOS. A contract is designed for each student, and when the contract is completed, the student is exited.

### Outcome Information

Mid-year Report Through December 1988: The mid-year report indicated that 57 students had been enrolled; 12 were students returning from the previous year. Average attendance was 87 percent.

Outcome information was shown for 49 of the 57 students. Records indicated that 25 were enrolled and 24 had exited mostly for lack of attendance. Ratings on Progress Toward Goal showed 21 were good or excellent, 6 fair, and 22 poor. Ratings for nearly all who had withdrawn were poor.

Year-end Report for 1987-88: AYOS enrolled 116 students during the 1987-88 school year; average enrollment at the end of each month, September through May, was 32.5. Average daily attendance was 85 percent.

Disposition of students was expressed as enrolled (to the end of the year), completed (planned program), or withdrawn (prematurely). Disposition of students were as follows:

- 28 enrolled to the end of the year
- 5 completed planned programs
- 83 withdrew prematurely

Durations of student enrollments according to the disposition categories were as follows:

| <u>Stays-months</u> | <u>Enrolled</u> | <u>Completed</u> | <u>Withdrawn</u> |
|---------------------|-----------------|------------------|------------------|
| 1 or less           | 9               | 0                | 44               |
| 2                   | 8               | 0                | 13               |
| 3                   | 0               | 1                | 9                |
| 4                   | 3               | 0                | 3                |
| 5                   | 2               | 3                | 6                |
| 6                   | 1               | 0                | 5                |
| 7                   | 2               | 0                | 1                |
| 8                   | 1               | 0                | 1                |
| 9                   | 2               | 0                | 0                |
| NI                  | 0               | 1                | 1                |
| Total               | 28              | 5                | 83               |

Other outcome data: AYOS reported pre-test and post-test scores of students on an AYOS math test and Peabody Individual Achievement Test in math and reading. Numbers of students tested and duration of time between pre- and post-tests were not reported, so the data were not summarized and cannot be interpreted.

For several years, AYOS has submitted monthly reports on attendance and enrollment. In addition to this information, the reports contain information on students who exited and reasons for exiting, and information on students making up time and work missed in school. Exiting information summarized for September 1987 to June 1988, and for September 1988 to the most current, April 1989, is as follows:

| <u>9/87-6/88</u> | <u>9/88-4/89</u> | <u>Reason for Exiting</u>              |
|------------------|------------------|----------------------------------------|
| 5                | 5                | Returned to Portland Schools           |
| 2                | 5                | Transferred to out-of-district school  |
| 9                | 4                | Enrolled elsewhere in GED program      |
| 1                | 7                | Transferred to other educational inst. |
| 3                | 6                | Family moved out of district/state     |
| 60               | 25               | Withdraw - reasons unknown             |
| 2                | 2                | Other (reason not indicated)           |
| 89               | 54               |                                        |

Information on students who needed to make up time and work they missed to maintain their enrollment indicated that each month usually 75 to 85 percent of the students needed to make up time and about the same percent needed to make up work. Usually, students who needed to make up time each month did so; however, of those who needed to make up work each month, occasionally only about half did so. An important purpose of the make up was to reinforce the earlier commitment students had made--that they be held accountable

for time and work to maintain their enrollment just as they might be held accountable to an employer.

### Comments and Recommendations

Although AYOS has students go through an intake process before enrollment, few students are rejected. AYOS has space and claim resource capabilities for handling up to 50 students, so virtually all students referred to AYOS are accommodated. Given that students currently appear to be more difficult to handle, perhaps it is time to reconsider the resources and the intake process to increase effectiveness. Data on the duration of enrollment of students can be used to increase effectiveness.

The Director of AYOS once stated that in order for teaching and learning to occur, "you must first get the student's attention." AYOS students of a decade ago were observed to be the most reluctant learners among alternative schools. In the early 80's AYOS began to experience much greater success in "getting the students' attention" judging from observations of students in class doing school work, work completed, and the longer durations of their enrollment which began to average three or four months. However, the most recent year-end and mid-year reports from the school tend to support impressions and observations that students have become increasingly more difficult to handle. The year-end report indicated that over 70 percent of all students enrolled during the year withdrew or were exited from school before completing their planned program or completing the school year. The recent mid-year report for the period through December 1988 indicated that half had already exited even though only four months had passed. In both reports, the large majority of those who exited were enrolled for only two months or less, most of them for only a month. The fact that of 28 students who were enrolled last Spring at AYOS, only 12 returned in the Fall should also be considered.

It is quite unlikely that much can be accomplished in a month or two; and, what is accomplished by a few, if anything, should be balanced against possible negative influences or effects on others. For example, students can get the impression that leaving after a few weeks or so is "no big deal"--that it is not an inconvenience or financial loss to anyone, and, therefore, is acceptable. This behavior is again reinforced and can be reinforced in other students who observe this behavior to the extent that they too are more inclined to take the same route. The students may come to feel no compulsion or social obligation to remain enrolled. They do not realize that it is a waste of the school's time and resources which could be used better on others. Balance this against the distinct possibility that this kind of compulsive, compliant, and socially obligatory behavior and attitudes are what AYOS would like to foster. This use of duration of enrollment data

is but one example of how data from duration of enrollment can be summarized, interpreted, and used to affect program decisions.

Recommendation 1: that AYOS continue its efforts in serving students to prepare them for life after school. In this regard, AYOS should follow former students to determine how successful the program has been in reaching this goal. Duration of time students were enrolled at AYOS should be an important variable to determine effectiveness in achieving the goal.

Recommendation 2: AYOS should consider if fewer students might be served better if resources now devoted to some of the higher risk students with very little gain were directed to those with lower risks. At this point there is no evidence to indicate that the benefits to students who were enrolled for less than two months were sufficient to justify continuing to serve them. In this regard, the intake process should take into account the probability of students remaining enrolled in the program for longer durations.

Recommendation 3: that AYOS consider making graduation standards testing available to its students at appropriately scheduled intervals.

## AYOS - GENESIS

### Overview

As a result of the downsizing of MacLaren and Hillcrest Training Schools, the Children's Services Division contracted with Habilitation Associates to establish Frontier I in January 1987. Subsequently, the contract to serve these students was awarded to AYOS who established Genesis in Fall 1988. Genesis is a private alternative school for youths who are under court order to attend as a condition of parole, probation, or diversion from MacLaren and Hillcrest. Treatment for the students focusses on the modification of student behavior to become more socially acceptable and for them to become more responsible citizens. In the process, students are provided basic academic education courses.

### Outcome Information

Mid-year Report Through December 1988: The mid-year report indicated that 32 students had been enrolled; 18 were regular education and 14 were special education students. Average attendance was 72 percent.

Outcome information indicated that of the 32 students, 12 were enrolled and 20 had exited. Of the 20 who exited, 7 reached satisfactory outcomes of returning to PPS (3) or transferring to the Job Corps or similar setting (4). Thirteen did not reach satisfactory outcomes, i.e., they failed to meet school requirements for attendance or behavior, were in custody, were incarcerated, ran away, or did not show up as scheduled. The academic goal for 25 students was returning to middle or high schools, while the goal for 7 was a GED. Over half of the students targeted to return to schools were less than 16 years of age.

Ratings on Progress Toward Goal indicated nine rated "excellent," seven "good," six "fair," and ten "poor." All those who were rated "poor," exited prematurely with nearly all of them enrolling for only a month or two, or less.

Year-End Report for 1987-88: To date, no report for 1987-88 has been received from Frontier I which was the forerunner of Genesis, so data for the 1987-88 school year cannot be summarized. According to accounts, records and activities of Frontier I were reviewed extensively before the agreement was reached to transfer the program to AYOS.

### Comments and Recommendations

The program has been in operation at AYOS for only a few months; therefore, it seems premature to make comments or recommendations at this time. The inclusion of this much of the report for AYOS - Genesis is simply a reminder that students like those now being served by Genesis were formerly served by another institution, and the reader may refer to the previous report for Frontier I for background information.

## DE PAUL TREATMENT CENTERS, INC.

### Overview

De Paul Treatment Centers (DePaul) offers a year-round educational program to complement its treatment programs for alcohol and drug abuse. The main criterion for entering the program is a primary alcohol or drug abuse problem, and overcoming this problem is the main goal. The educational program continues only so long as the client's treatment or he/she exits from De Paul. (De Paul receives clients from other school districts and other counties. In reports submitted by the Center, clients from PPS are not distinguished, so data for all clients are summarized together.)

### Outcome Information

Mid-year Report Through December 1988: Unlike the reports of other alternative schools, the mid-year report for DePaul covered the period from July through December 1988. The report indicated that 69 clients had been enrolled; 23 of the 69 were clients who were simply carried over from the previous year of reporting. Average attendance was 93 percent.

Outcome information indicated that 20 were currently enrolled and 49 had exited. Of the 49 who exited, 14 returned to PPS schools, 3 completed their GEDs, 2 obtained full time employment, 1 was transferred, and 29 moved out of the District. Of the 29 who moved out of the District, progress ratings for 16 were good or excellent, and most of them had been at De Paul for about three months or so. In a telephone call to DePaul, the Education Coordinator indicated that it was most likely the 16 successfully completed the treatment program.

Year-end Report for 1987-88: De Paul has clients year-round, so this report is for the full year from July 1987 through June 1988. The year-end report included information on 127 clients who were enrolled during the reporting period. Average daily attendance was 93 percent.

Disposition of clients for the year:

- 18 enrolled at the end of the reporting period
- 33 completed treatment
- 76 withdrawn

Durations of enrollment:

| <u>Stays-Months</u> | <u>Disposition Category</u> |                  |                  |
|---------------------|-----------------------------|------------------|------------------|
|                     | <u>Enrolled</u>             | <u>Completed</u> | <u>Withdrawn</u> |
| 1                   | 15                          | 0                | 47               |
| 2                   | 1                           | 2                | 14               |
| 3                   | 1                           | 15               | 8                |
| 4                   | 0                           | 7                | 3                |
| 5                   | 0                           | 5                | 3                |
| 6                   | 0                           | 2                | 0                |
| 7                   | 0                           | 0                | 0                |
| 8                   | 0                           | 0                | 1                |
| 9 or more           | 1                           | 2                | 0                |
| Total               | 18                          | 33               | 76               |

Other than the extension or continuation of education beyond graduation from De Paul, the Alternative School program is not directed toward achieving specific educational goals. However, clients who meet certain qualifications in terms of age, grade level, graduation credits, and interest may choose to pursue their GEDs, and the Alternative school would assist them. The Year-End Report indicated that 15 clients received their GEDs while they were in residential treatment during the year. There were none the previous year.

Comments and Recommendations

The De Paul Alternative School is an integral part of the alcohol and drug treatment program; however, the main goal is not so much educational, but relief from chemical dependency. Last year, the De Paul Alternative School attempted to determine the academic and vocational options available to its clients when they leave, so they can be better prepared when the time comes. One option is returning to regular schools, and efforts of the school to get clients prepared for and enrolled in their home school are regarded as successful. Arrangements are made with various school counselors, CSD workers, and probation officers to plan for a safe and successful return for graduating clients. The De Paul Alternative School is to be commended for its efforts to go the extra mile in determining appropriate options for graduates of its program and preparing for those options.

Recommendation 1: that De Paul continue its efforts in preparing clients for life after treatment. In this regard, records and reports that show, in some way, for whom the treatment was successful, no decision, or a failure would be helpful for evaluation purposes. Specifically, the success/failure distinction of the disposition of clients as shown by the categories in the Mid-Year report are quite clear and useful except for the

frequently selected one, "8-moved out of District. Also, in the year-end report, the category, "Withdrawn," appears to include both successes and failures and, perhaps, a distinction is necessary.

Recommendation 2: that data for the duration of time for successful completion of the treatment program be compiled and maintained. De Paul uses a well organized, systematic method in its treatment program and data on time-for-completion would be useful for the program and for other program implementors.

Recommendation 3: that DePaul report data to PPS in both mid-year and year-end reports that indicate district of origin for all students.

Recommendation 4: that DePaul consider making graduation standards testing available at appropriately scheduled intervals for qualifying PPS students.

## LENTS EDUCATION CENTER

### Overview

The Lents Education Center (LEC) year-end report stated that the Center's program is "designed to help students who have been unsuccessful in public school further their education." The intent is to intervene long enough to help students determine what is wrong and what can be done, and to set about doing it. Once a decision is reached, students can make a commitment to education and possible transition to an appropriate school.

### Outcome Information

Mid-Year Report Through December 1988: The mid-year report indicated that 45 students had been enrolled; 35 were regular education, including 3 under Student Retention Initiative contracts, and 10 were special education. Ten of the 45 were students who were enrolled at LEC the previous school year. The overall average attendance was 81.6 percent.

Outcome information showed 30 remained enrolled and 15 had exited. Of those who exited, one returned to PPS Continuing Education for Girls and one transferred to the Job Corps. Nine exits appeared to be unsatisfactory or premature, e.g., failure to meet school requirements, runaway, or moved out of District. No reason for exiting was indicated for the remaining four. Two of the three students enrolled under Student Retention Initiative contracts exited after a month or less. Ratings on Progress Toward Goal for 32 students in the regular education program showed 17 were "good" or "excellent," 9 were "fair," and 6 were "poor." Nearly all those whose progress was rated "poor" had exited the program before the end of December.

Year-End Report for 1987-88: The LEC year-end report indicated that 78 students were enrolled during the 1987-88 school year. Seven were enrolled under Student Retention Initiative contracts and 16 under special education contracts. Although average daily attendance was not reported, it has been between 80 and 85 percent over the years.

Disposition of students for the year:

#### Outcome satisfactory (53 percent)

- 7 Returned to PPS during the year
- 8 Expected to return to PPS in Fall
- 1 Transitioned to GED program
- 4 Transferred to out-of-district schools
- 21 Expected to return to LEC in Fall

Outcome unsatisfactory/questionable (47 percent)

15 Dropped by LEC

22 Withdrew voluntarily or with parent approval.

Information on entry and exit dates of students was not shown in the year-end report, so duration of student stays are not reported.

Each Fall and Spring, LEC students who qualify for district-wide testing take the Portland Achievement Levels Tests and/or Graduation Standards Tests. Although this fact was noted, student performances on these tests were not reported.

About 75 to 80 percent of LEC students have not reached their 16 birthdays and cannot qualify for GED programs or have mandatory school attendance waived, so extending their education into public schools or other institutions is a viable option. LEC's main purpose is to intervene long enough at a critical point to help students turn around and make more socially acceptable decisions about their lives.

Comments and Recommendations

Lents Education Center has been in operation for nearly 13 years. While it has experienced some difficult times, it has been able to sustain operations quite well under stable leadership. The former director served about five years, and the present director has been there about six years. During this time, LEC has established a reputation as a viable alternative school serving the Southeast Portland area. The mid-year report containing the names of about 40 students on an active waiting list attests to the need for services provided by the Center.

A significant portion of LEC students is 13 to 14 years of age (grades 8 and 9) and young enough to have a good shot at meeting the requirements for a standard diploma. LEC is to be commended for arranging and providing the variety of services it does for its students whose problems appear to be increasing or becoming more severe.

Recommendation 1: that LEC continue its efforts in providing services for students referred to it. In this regard, some method of predetermining satisfactory outcomes for students should be established. Specifically, those projected to transition (to public schools) in the Fall, or expected to return to LEC may be considered satisfactory outcomes; however, there is no evidence to confirm the projections. For example, the 1987-88 year-end report indicated that 21 students were projected to return to LEC in the Fall, but the mid-year report to December 1988 showed that only 10 returned. Information on students reaching satisfactory outcomes could be useful also in establishing criteria for selecting students from the waiting list.

Recommendation 2: that data for the duration of time students remain enrolled at LEC be maintained for evaluation purposes. These data would be useful in determining how long students might be expected to remain enrolled to reach satisfactory outcomes, or for program improvement purposes.

Recommendation 3: that LEC continue the practice of administering the PPS Graduation Standards Tests to all students who have not previously demonstrated minimum competency in the basic skills.

## MORRISON CENTER DRUG AND ALCOHOL TREATMENT PROGRAM

### Overview

The Morrison Center Drug and Alcohol Treatment Program (Morrison) offers an educational program that is an integral part of its treatment program for youths committed to State Training Schools for criminal offenses, and who have alcohol or drug addiction.. The program consists of three phases each about three months duration averaging a total of nine months. The treatment features a 12-Step program for a clean and sober lifestyle that takes clients through the phases of intensive education and group and family counseling, re-introduction into the community, and after care. (Morrison receives clients from other school districts and other counties. In reports submitted by the Program, PPS clients are not distinguished: therefore, data for all clients are summarized together.)

### Outcome Information

Mid-Year Report Through December 1988: Morrison operates year-round, so the report covers the period from July to December 1988. The report indicated that 38 clients were enrolled; 13 had been enrolled before July 1, 1988 and were carried over. Average daily attendance was 99 percent.

Outcome information indicated that 18 clients remained enrolled and 20 had exited. Of the 20 who exited, 6 had completed GEDs and were in or near their last phase of transferring, e.g., home and school or work, 8 more were in different phases of transferring. Six were judged as having unsatisfactory outcomes; two were expelled and four ran away. Ratings on Progress Toward Goal were recorded for 27 clients: 21 were rated "excellent" or "good," 4 were rated "fair," and 2 were rated "poor."

Year-End Report for 1987-88: The year-end report which covered the period from July 1, 1987 to June 30, 1988 included information for 54 clients some of whom entered the program as early as January 1987. Average daily attendance was 99 percent.

Disposition of students for the year:

- 16 enrolled in first or second phase
- 1 after care with full time employment
- 1 transferred to Monitoring Program
- 16 completed all phases of treatment
- 20 terminated prematurely by Morrison

Durations of enrollment:

| <u>Stays-Months</u> | <u>Enrolled</u> | <u>Disposition Category</u> |                   |              |
|---------------------|-----------------|-----------------------------|-------------------|--------------|
|                     |                 | <u>Completed</u>            | <u>Terminated</u> | <u>Other</u> |
| 1 or less           | 3               | 0                           | 7                 | 0            |
| 2                   | 5               | 0                           | 7                 | 0            |
| 3                   | 1               | 2                           | 1                 | 0            |
| 4                   | 1               | 0                           | 0                 | 0            |
| 5                   | 2               | 1                           | 2                 | 1            |
| 6                   | 2               | 2                           | 1                 | 1            |
| 7                   | 1               | 1                           | 0                 | 0            |
| 8                   | 1               | 4                           | 1                 | 0            |
| 9                   | 0               | 0                           | 0                 | 0            |
| <u>10 or more</u>   | <u>0</u>        | <u>6</u>                    | <u>1</u>          | <u>0</u>     |
| Total               | 16              | 16                          | 20                | 2            |

The main goal for clients at Morrison is to maintain acceptable behavior and to overcome alcohol and drug dependency. Depending on the severity of the case, the time involved to complete the program ranged from as few as 3 months to 14. Six of 16 took 10 months or more to complete the program successfully. On the negative side, several clients were enrolled five months or more before they were terminated because they became unmanageable or violated rules for placement at Morrison.

With few exceptions, the educational goal for clients is to obtain their GEDs, and they work on this goal while undergoing treatment. The Education Coordinator indicated that to maintain client motivation for doing school work, GED examinations are taken just before the client completes the program rather than when the client is academically ready. She reported that nearly all who completed the treatment program obtained their GEDs.

Comments and Recommendations

About a year ago, Morrison took a bold step in the way their clients were managed. Previously, clients were held in residency under close scrutiny, and gradually re-introduced to the community. Now they reside with "proctor parents," parents who have been trained and are part of the treatment team, in what is called "certified intensive residential treatment (CIRT)" for the initial phase of treatment and "alternative residential treatment (ART)" for the next phase. While they are in CIRT, clients are attended or closely monitored by a tracker 24 hours a day. While they are in ART, clients have permission to travel by bus such as to go to appointments and attend meetings or classes on their own. In the final phase, clients may reside with their own parents or independently, with final after-care treatment being provided. Morrison offers an Alumni Group and individual and family counseling after the final phase. The Education Coordinator indicated that with the new system, there were fewer problems with

their clients and the arrangement appeared to be more beneficial. Morrison is to be commended for attempting the bold new step.

Recommendation 1: that Morrison continue its efforts in preparing clients for life after treatment. In this regard, there are both realistic academic outcomes as well as treatment outcomes for Morrison clients, e.g., they can complete a GED and complete all aspects of their rehabilitation and alcohol and drug treatment (graduate).

Recommendation 2: that Morrison use dual codes in reporting the disposition of its clients, e.g., codes 2 and 3 to indicate students who completed the treatment program and obtained their GEDs.

Recommendation 3: that Morrison report data to PPS in both mid-year and year-end reports that indicate district of origin for all students.

Recommendation 4: that Morrison consider making graduation standard testing available at appropriately scheduled intervals for qualifying PPS students.

## OPEN MEADOW LEARNING CENTER

### Overview

Open Meadow Learning Center (OMLC) provides a comprehensive educational program for students who have had a history of academic, legal, and socio-emotional problems that prevented them from progressing in public schools. The intention is for students to continue their education for as long as possible whether it be at OMLC or another institution. Although returning to public schools is an option, only a handful exercise the option each year. Students may continue to be enrolled at OMLC as long as they are making satisfactory progress, and a number of them continue for more than a year or two. Each year a few graduate from the Center and a few more obtain GEDs.

### Outcome Information

Mid-Year Report Through December 1988: The mid-year report indicated that 44 students had been enrolled. OMLC projected that 26 students would be returning from the previous school year, and actually all but one did. Average daily attendance was 86 percent.

Outcome information indicated that 39 continued to be enrolled and only 5 had exited: 3 had runaway and 2 were exited for lack of attendance. Ratings on Progress Toward Goal for the 39 students who remained enrolled showed 34 were "excellent," 4 were "good," and 1 was "fair." None were rated "poor."

Year-End Report for 1987-88: The year-end report indicated that 67 students were enrolled during the school year. Average daily attendance was 85 percent. The statuses of students at the end of the year were reported in terms of projected return, several categories of completing the program, and several withdrawal and exited categories.

Disposition of students at end of the school year:

- 26 enrolled and projected to enroll next year
- 17 completed (e.g., graduated, GED, public school, other transition)
- 12 family or self withdrawal (e.g., dropped, to other treatment, moved, runaway)
- 12 exited by OMLC (e.g., attendance, academic performance, drugs)

Academic Achievement: Students at OMLC who had not previously demonstrated minimum graduation competency in the basic skills took the PPS Graduation Standards Tests in Spring 1988. A summary of

the results showed that 18 of 19 passed reading, 10 of 19 passed math, and all 15 of 15 passed the language usage test. PPS encourages the alternatives schools to use the tests, and commends OMLC for doing so now.

Durations of enrollment by prescribed disposition categories: (\*Note: Student assignment to disposition categories as indicated in the body of the year-end report and summarized above was not the same as the assignment using the categories prescribed District for reporting purposes. Dispositions for 13 of the 37 students in the "Withdrawn" category should have been in the "Completed" category.)

| <u>Stays-Months</u> | <u>Disposition Categories</u> |                  |                  |
|---------------------|-------------------------------|------------------|------------------|
|                     | <u>Enrolled</u>               | <u>Completed</u> | <u>Withdrawn</u> |
| 1 or less           | 0                             | 0                | 2                |
| 2                   | 10                            | 0                | 1                |
| 3                   | 0                             | 0                | 1                |
| 4                   | 2                             | 0                | 1                |
| 5                   | 4                             | 0                | 7                |
| 6                   | 2                             | 0                | 2                |
| 7                   | 0                             | 0                | 5                |
| 8                   | 2                             | 0                | 3                |
| 9                   | 1                             | 0                | 6                |
| <u>10 or more</u>   | <u>5</u>                      | <u>4</u>         | <u>7</u>         |
|                     | 26                            | 4                | 37*              |

As indicated above, a fair number of students remain enrolled at OMLC for more than a school year, i.e., ten months or more, a few of them for more than two years. OMLC recognizes these students as disenfranchised and without a sense of affiliation, and acknowledges that it takes time to build affiliation through its philosophy and interaction style of treatment.

#### Comments and Recommendations

For many high risk youths, private alternative schools are the "last stop;" they have bounced from school to school, program to program, without success in "connecting." The philosophy and treatment style of OMLC was adopted to overcome feelings of disenfranchisement and alienation. Making sufficiently complete and permanent changes in the socio-psychological makeup of individuals to ensure later success is difficult, often unpredictable, and frequently takes more resources, including time. OMLC appears to be making the investment of time. Significant changes in student behavior, maturity, and self esteem are reflected, in the behaviors of students, at least, in the classrooms. The fact that nearly every student projected to return to OMLC in the fall did so indicates that some sense of responsibility had been developed. OMLC is to be commended for developing and implementing its particular brand of interactional-

behavioral treatment approach that appears to be well demonstrated and supported by research.

Recommendation 1: that OMLC continue its efforts in preparing youths for life after schooling and in the community. In this regard, OMLC should seek support for research to determine if longer intervals of enrollment, e.g., more than a year, lead to more favorable long term outcomes than shorter intervals of enrollment as observed in most programs. Results of this study could have implications for the educational programs of alternative schools.

Recommendation 2: that OMLC continue the practice of administering the PPS Graduation Standards Tests to all students who have not previously demonstrated minimum competency in the basic skills.

PORTLAND OPPORTUNITIES INDUSTRIALIZATION CENTER, INC.

Overview

The Educational Clinic is that part of the Portland Opportunities Industrialization Center (POIC) that serves at-risk students to overcome weaknesses in basic skills and to develop positive self-concepts. Depending on the students age, academic achievement record and other considerations, the student may choose one of two tracks, high school re-entry or GED preparation. Educational plans for students are established based on their selected track.

Outcome Information

Mid-Year Report Through December 1988: The mid-year report indicated that 49 students had been enrolled; 15 were returning students from the previous year. Average daily attendance was 78 percent.

Outcome information shown for the 49 students indicated that 37 were enrolled as of December 1988 and 12 had exited. Two of the 12 who exited had returned to PPS, 5 were exited for lack of attendance, 3 were expelled, 1 moved and the last exited for other reasons. Ten of the 12 exited students were enrolled for one month or less.

Ratings on Progress Toward Goal for the 49 students showed 12 were "excellent" or "good," 19 were "fair," and the remaining 18 were "poor." With the exception of one of the two students who exited to return to PPS, the ratings of the exited students were "poor" or "fair."

Year-End Report for 1987-88: POIC enrolled 90 students during the year. Enrollment varied considerably during the year ranging from lows of 14 and 11 during the first and last months of the school year, respectively, to a high of 53 in April. Average monthly enrollment for the ten month period from September to June was 30. Average daily attendance was 77 Percent.

Disposition of students was expressed as enrolled (to the end of the year), completed (planned program), or withdrawn (prematurely). Dispositions of students at the end of the school year were as follows:

11 enrolled to the end of the school year  
45 completed planned programs  
34 withdrew prematurely

During the year, 63 students were targeted to the re-entry track and 27 to the GED track. At the end of the year, the disposition of the students according to these tracks were as follows:

| <u>Track</u> | <u>N</u> | <u>Disposition Category</u> |                  |                  |
|--------------|----------|-----------------------------|------------------|------------------|
|              |          | <u>Enrolled</u>             | <u>Completed</u> | <u>Withdrawn</u> |
| Re-entry     | 63       | 8 (13%)                     | 35 (56%)         | 20 (32%)         |
| GED          | 27       | 3 (11%)                     | 10 (37%)         | 14 (52%)         |

The data above indicate that over half of the Re-entry students completed their planned programs by the end of the year and had re-entered a school or were expected to re-enter a school in the Fall; about a third withdrew prematurely. The majority of students who completed their re-entry plan did so in four months or less; the mode was two months.

Among the 27 GED track students, 10 completed their plans for GED, while 14 withdrew before completion. Those who completed their plans were enrolled for as little as a month up to nearly the full school year.

Durations of student enrollments according to disposition categories were as follows:

| <u>Stays-months</u> | <u>Enrolled</u> | <u>Completed</u> | <u>Withdrawn</u> |
|---------------------|-----------------|------------------|------------------|
| 1 or less           | 2               | 5                | 13               |
| 2                   | 0               | 15               | 11               |
| 3                   | 3               | 9                | 7                |
| 4                   | 2               | 6                | 1                |
| 5                   | 0               | 3                | 1                |
| 6                   | 3               | 2                | 1                |
| 7                   | 0               | 1                | 0                |
| 8                   | 0               | 3                | 0                |
| 9                   | 1               | 1                | 0                |
| Total               | 11              | 45               | 34               |

In addition to attendance, academic performances and behavior of students were evaluated by POIC. Academic performances were assessed regularly using POIC criterion tests and, as indicated above, by instructor evaluations of student progress in completing planned programs. Student behavior and academic achievement were reviewed by staff members in weekly disposition conferences.

#### Comments and Recommendations

The two-track offering of POIC clearly sets outcomes for its students. Those who have reached their 16th birthdays have an option of which track to take, but younger students do not. It is

interesting to note that even though older students can opt for GEDs, the goal for two-thirds of them was re-entry. An important condition in considering a student for re-entry is that the student have a realistic chance of getting a regular high school diploma. This means that in addition to the appropriate motivation and support from parents and school counselor, the student should have earned credit and could accumulate enough credits to graduate in a reasonable time. Academic ability is important, and past achievement test scores are good indicators.

Recommendation 1: that POIC continue its efforts in serving youths in their re-entry and GED programs. In this regard, POIC should consider making PPS graduation standards testing available at appropriately scheduled intervals for qualifying students, and, where data are available, use data from the District wide testing program (PALT) to help in placing students in the re-entry or GED track.

Recommendation 2: that re-entry students be tracked to determine the extent of their success in returning to regular schools. This information would be useful in determining the effectiveness of the POIC re-entry program.

Recommendation 3: that data on durations of enrollment and dispositions of students be recorded carefully and accurately to determine minimum durations necessary to achieve the defined measures of success, e.g., re-entry, GED. This information would be useful in making program decisions.

## QUEST ALTERNATIVE SCHOOL

### Overview

Quest Schools, Inc., (Quest) has three divisions: Alternative School, Vocational Training, and Adult Tutoring. It is a privately owned, for profit corporation with one person having full ownership. In addition to Portland Public Schools, Quest contracts with Sherwood and Tigard School Districts, the Portland Private Industry Council and Washington County Community Action Council to provide education and training. At Quest, students may earn high school credit, GED, or receive vocational training in one of several business related fields, e.g., typing, computer use. There is an instructional staff identified with the Alternative School, and one identified with the Vocational Training and Adult tutoring programs. This report contains information only for Alternative School students referred from PPS. These students have "learning contracts" that target them for earning credits or GEDs.

### Outcome Information

Mid-Year Report Through December 1988: The mid-year report indicated that 60 students had been enrolled; 21 were students who were enrolled the previous year. The 60 students enrolled through December exceeds the number enrolled during the entire 1987-88 school year by 15. Average attendance was 78 percent.

Outcome information indicated that 46 were enrolled and 14 had exited. Of the 14 who exited, 9 were exited for lack of attendance, 3 were expelled, and 2 left for other reasons (e.g., illness, medical) considered premature exits. Three of the 14 were exited after two or three months and 11 after one month or less. Ratings on Progress Toward Goal were quite normally distributed with 20 rated "excellent" or "good," 22 rated "fair," and 4 rated "poor." The 14 who were exited were not rated.

The learning contracts for 53 of the 60 students were for earning high school credit; only 7 were for GEDs. It is interesting to note that of the 53 students whose contract were for earning credit, 30 were 16 years of age or older. Apparently most Quest students have opted to try to earn a standard diploma.

Year-End Report for 1987-88: Quest's Year-End Report indicated that 58 PPS students were enrolled during the 1987-88 school year. Except for the month of September, average enrollment was about 30 each month. Average daily attendance was 71 percent.

Disposition of students for the year:

18 Enrolled to end of year  
18 Completed planned program  
22 Withdrawn (dropped, terminated, expelled)

Durations of enrollment according to disposition category:

| <u>Stays-Months</u> | <u>Disposition Category</u> |                  |                  |
|---------------------|-----------------------------|------------------|------------------|
|                     | <u>Enrolled</u>             | <u>Completed</u> | <u>Withdrawn</u> |
| 1 or less           | 2                           | 2                | 6                |
| 2                   | 6                           | 0                | 3                |
| 3                   | 0                           | 0                | 7                |
| 4                   | 2                           | 2                | 4                |
| 5                   | 0                           | 1                | 1                |
| 6                   | 3                           | 4                | 1                |
| 7                   | 1                           | 3                | 0                |
| 8                   | 2                           | 3                | 0                |
| 9                   | 2                           | 3                | 0                |
| Total               | 18                          | 18               | 22               |

The tabulations of durations of enrollment with the disposition categories show that of the 18 students who completed their planned programs, 13 were enrolled six months or more. Tabulations also show that 8 of 18 students enrolled at the end of the year were enrolled six months or more. These eight students continued to be enrolled the next school year, thus extending their duration of enrollment even longer. On the other hand, 20 of the 22 students who were withdrawn prematurely were enrolled for only four months or less. Duration of enrollment appears to be a significant factor in the outcomes of students.

The goal for most Quest students the last two years (85 percent) has been high school credits; only about 15 percent were working toward their GEDs. In 1987-88 apparently five completed the GED requirements, two more were still working on their GEDs at the end of the school year, and four had withdrawn. This success rate of nearly half of those seeking GEDs seems satisfactory for this student population.

Comments and Recommendations

Quest and POIC are alike in a couple of important ways. Both have vocational education programs in business/clerical areas where alternative school students may take courses along with adults. Although the adult students, staffing, organizational structures and other features may have positive influences on the younger students and benefits to program operations, the arrangements, apparently, were not intentional.

Both schools offer GED programs along with high school credit. This option is particularly suited for students over 16 years of age who have earned too few credits to graduate in a reasonable time with a standard diploma. Even though this option is available, apparently most students in both schools expect to earn credits and, perhaps, return to regular schools, i.e., the option does not appear to influence students to take the easy way out.

The tabulations on durations of enrollment and dispositions of Quest students tend to indicate, but to a slightly less extent for POIC students, that durations of six months or more are needed for students to be successful in the program. At this time it is not known if "completing planned programs" means the same in both schools, so the comparisons are made with caution.

Recommendation 1: that Quest continue its efforts in providing youths the opportunity to earn high school credits or earn a GED. In this regard, data on durations of enrollment and dispositions of students should be recorded carefully and accurately to determine minimum durations of enrollment necessary to achieve a defined measure of success, e.g., completing planned program by returning to public school, entered Job Corps, GED. This information would be useful in making program decisions. Also, letting students know "about how long it will take" could do a lot for their attendance.

Recommendation 2: that Quest consider making PPS graduation standard testing available at appropriately scheduled intervals for qualifying PPS students.

### Summary and Conclusions

The most frequently asked question about the evaluation of an alternative school program, or any program, is "How effective is it?" If we are only concerned with effectiveness, and not efficiency, then this question cannot be answered without definite, expected outcomes. If we also want to include efficiency, then we need to know on what bases efficiency is to be determined, e.g., time, costs, compared to other alternatives. If we are also concerned with what happens after the expected outcomes are achieved, then we need to know what we would like to have happen. With regard to the alternative schools, the first priority is to have definite outcomes. Without outcomes, questions of effectiveness and efficiency are moot.

Because explicit student outcomes were not always identified for the alternative schools, fairly detailed descriptions of each school's philosophy, its educational program and resources, and student population were included in reports for each school. The purpose was to provide information for decision makers to deduce appropriate outcomes, or to determine if those identified by the school were the most reasonable and appropriate.

Over the years of working with students, each school has adopted its own philosophy and developed its program around the kinds of students it generally receives. Some schools are more selective than others in the kinds of students they enroll. Some focus more on academic work, others on behavior change. Some can provide education only so long as necessary for the student to complete a treatment program, others have definite educational goals to be reached. Some expect students to be enrolled for longer durations than others. Some expect to be the last educational institution their students will attend, others expect their students to continue their education elsewhere. Some provide instruction for GEDs, others refer students for GED instruction, and so on. Even within schools, students differ in very significant ways, e.g., age/grade level, academic proficiency, high school credits earned, personal/social problems. Outcomes for students within schools can be so different that forming groups on the basis of student outcomes is difficult, if not impossible, and, perhaps even meaningless. This does not mean that stating outcomes for students is meaningless; outcomes are absolutely necessary to determine the treatment of students and the effectiveness of the treatment and program as a whole.

A fairly common reaction of any program staff to setting outcomes, objectives, or goals is hesitation or apprehension. This reaction is completely justified because setting challenging or optimal ones and failing to achieve them is often viewed as a failure, fault, or weakness of the program leaving it open to criticism and even discipline. On the other hand, setting goals that are achieved at

the 100 percent level to avoid criticism invites complacency and does little to improve the program. The alternative schools have been encouraged continually to pre-determine or predict outcomes either for individuals or groups and to report achievement in terms of these outcomes. Most schools now have student "contracts" or planned programs; however, to what extent pre-determined or predicted outcomes are a part of the contracts or planned programs is not known. At least, it is not clear from information provided in the year-end and mid-year reports of schools what data apply to these outcomes.

In case there were questions that the outcomes were not clearly defined, predetermined, or predicted, the quantity of services provided to students along with other program information was included for use as a measure of return on investment. Numbers of students and total hours or months of service without some indication of the distribution of services among students would not be sufficient; therefore, daily attendance and durations of student enrollment were reported. The latter were reported in terms of outcome categories to allow some inferences about the quality of the outcomes. For example, students enrolled for a full school year might be expected to gain more than students enrolled for two months.

Given the variety of students and circumstances of each school, can there be outcome standards by which effectiveness can be measured? If so, who should take the lead in setting the standards? How long does it take to predict reasonable outcomes for students? What are reasonable ones? These questions are not raised to discourage stating outcomes; on the contrary, they are raised as important considerations necessary to stating acceptable and reasonable ones for use in program evaluation.